DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 112 405 95 CS 202 259

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TITLE Creative Responses to Literature: Imagining, Personalizing, Clarifying, Valuing; Guide to the Film Series. Protokollon II.
INSTITUTION California State Univ. Foundation, Northridge.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE [75]
NOTE 23p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS *Creative Activities; *English Instruction; *Instructional Films; Instructional Materials; Literary Analysis; *Literature Appreciation; Secondary Education; Student Reaction; Teaching Guides; Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS *Protocol Materials in English Film Series

ABSTRACT

The Protocol Materials in English (PME) project was set up to study literature and the teaching of literature in an effort to determine whether it is possible to discover hierarchies of concepts and to create materials to illustrate those concepts. This guide--second in a series--focuses on the acts that the reader performs in responding to a given literary piece. These acts can be more or less creative according to the extent to which the reader participates in the reading experience by recreating the world of the book, investing the self, derive meaning, and finding worth in the text. Put more formally, these acts can be identified as imagining, personalizing, clarifying, and valuing. This book is designed to complement four films, each of which explicates a theory about the creativity of reader response. The guide ends with some questions and answers about the PME film series for studying literature. (RB)

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PROTOKOLLON II

Guide to the Film Series

CREATIVE RESPONSES TO LITERATURE:

Imagining
Personalizing
Clarifying
Valuing

R. W. Lid & Philip Handler

California State University Foundation, Northridge

The work presented or reported herein was performed pursuant to a Grant from the U.S. Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Office of Education, and no official endorsement by the U.S. Office of Education should be inferred.

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Introducing

PROTOCOL MATERIALS IN ENGLISH: Second Series

"About the word 'protocol,' " Edwin Laidlaw said, "I can settle that for you. Now that I'm a publisher I'm the last word on words. It comes from two Greek words, *protos,* meaning 'first,' and *kolla,* meaning 'glue.' Now why glue? Because in ancient Greece a *protokollon* was the first leaf, containing an account of the manuscript, glued to a roll of papyrus. Today a protocol may be any one of various kinds of documents — an original draft of something, or an account of some proceeding, or a record of an agreement."

—from *Champagne for One* by Rex Stout

For people in the field of English, the word "protocol" has had a particular meaning ever since I.A. Richards published *Practical Criticism* in 1929. Richards used the term to refer to the responses of British university students who were asked to write interpretations and evaluations of a group of unidentified poems. A "protocol" for Richards was in effect the document to bestudied — not the poem but the response, and Richards was able to draw conclusions from such documents about what he considered to be wrong readings and the poor taste of these students. For those who know the work of Richards, it is not hard to accept our sense of a "protocol" as a record of experience to be studied.

Our use of the term "protocol" does not come directly from Richards but by way of another book, *Teachers for the Real World.* In this book, which was an outgrowth of the federally funded NDEA National Institute for Advanced Study in Teaching Disadvantaged Youth, the principal author, B. Othanel Smith, introduced the term "protocol materials." Smith was looking for a way to bridge the gap between theory and practice in the training of teachers. He saw a need for the documentation and preservation of observable behaviors likely to be part of the normal experience of teaching. Smith's emphasis upon behavior — what actually happens rather than what people think happens — derived from his interest in training teachers for what he called "the real world" — a world of contingency, multiplicity, and ever-changing situations. Smith saw the value of various media — film, video tape, audio tape — for the capturing of behaviors and advocated the deliberate collecting of such behaviors.

At the same time, Smith argued that "being close to reality is insufficient." He proposed that "it is interpretation of reality that is important in teacher education." In order to interpret behavior some system of defining and classifying behavior is necessary — in Smith's terms, a set of concepts. In this way, every "protocol" has two parts: a record of behavior and a concept for interpreting that behavior. The concepts most discussed in *Teachers for the Real World* fall into the category of pedagogy, but from the beginning it was Smith's idea that protocol materials should be developed in the subject matter fields and that the appropriate concepts should be identified and behaviors collected in those fields. As a result of *Teachers for the Real World,* a national program for the training of protocol materials developers was funded by the United States Office of Education, involving some 15 projects in the making of protocol materials in pedagogy, educational psychology, the social sciences, and the language arts.

II

The Protocol Materials in English project was set up to study literature and the teaching of literature in an effort to determine whether it is possible to discover hierarchies of concepts and to create materials to illustrate those concepts. Among the conclusions reached, after a survey of classroom practices, literary manuals, textbooks, and handbooks, was that literary study in the classroom primarily consists of the teaching and learning of concepts of literary form. When content is discussed in English classes, the focus is predominantly on literary "themes" (which are formal, collective constructs) rather than on the reader's response to the content. In addition, it could be said that the idea of the archetype — especially Northrop Frye's elaboration of Jung's archetypes — represents an attempt to recognize the reader's response, but by definition the archetypes are responses of readers collectively. In sum, reader response has tended to remain at the periphery of the classroom except for the efforts of some teachers, at the lower grade levels usually, to involve the students' feelings through creative dramatics, unstructured personal writing, and "rap" sessions. These latter activities and others like them tend to lack a conceptual base of support — for learner and teacher. Thus the conceptual study of literature to date has by and large excluded the reader's response, while reader oriented study has generally excluded conceptual thinking. In both instances something important has been left out.

One consequence of the emphasis on the study of literary form in the school has been to ignore the reader's interest in the "aboutness" of literature — what the work has to say about life. This aboutness is probably what first attracts readers to literature, and what they, in turn, want to talk about.

Another consequence is that students too often feel that literature is arcane because the sophistication of classroom talk about literature – that is, talk about literary form – suggests to them that what the experts think is important about literature is not what they find interesting and important.

It was in light of the above that the PME project sought to determine the concepts that would relate the student reader's experience of literature to the kind of knowledge about literature considered important by critics and teachers. For this reason the first series of PME films, *Responding to Literature*, concentrated on one kind of relationship between the reader and the text. That series presents a category system for identifying, classifying, and defining aspects of the literary text to which the reader responds. The ten films show student readers responding to the various "contents" of literature, to literary form, and to the author-in-the-work. The films and guide purposely avoid statements about the "rightness" or "wrongness" of the students' responses but instead concentrate on the element within the work which led to the response, as well as the implications of the expression of that response.

In this second series of films, *Creative Responses to Literature*, the focus is on the acts that the reader performs in responding. These acts can be more or less creative according to the extent to which the reader participates in the reading experience by recreating the world of the book, investing the self, deriving meaning, and finding worth in the text. Put more formally, these acts can be identified as *imagining*, *personalizing*, *clarifying*, and *valuing*. These are the concepts examined in this series and guide.

English teachers have always known that such acts exist but, with the possible exception of courses for the training of reading specialists, there is no place in an English teacher's education to learn about the acts of the reader. Traditionally English teachers study the acts of the writer. We study the workings of the writer's imagination, the effect of the writer's personal life on the art, the writer's meaning, and the writer's values – all in the belief that these are the keys to literature. Without underestimating the value of such traditional studies, we want to point out that such a view of literature leads to the idea of the literary text as a locked treasure whose value is inherent in the text – a value determined only by those with proper credentials. All of this is to leave out the general reader, even the educated reader, and the reader's contribution to the experience of literature.

III

Several consequences follow from understanding the acts of the reader. On a practical, day-by-day level, as teachers we need all the information we can get about the behavior of readers, including student readers. We need to know what readers actually do and how and why they do it. The films in this series supply instances of reading behavior for the purposes of analysis and discussion. The reason for this behavioral approach is that in trying to bring about increased understanding and enjoyment for all readers as well as remediation for poor readers, we are working with behavior. In effect we want to urge students into a creativity that releases knowledge and pleasure.

With the concepts in this series, teachers have available one system of diagnosis of response – one that permits the identification of the anti-creative "blocking" acts of student readers. Once these acts have been identified, it becomes more possible to help students deal with them. On a more theoretical level, teachers have to understand creativity before they can help students to become creative. Creativity in responding to literature involves all four of the acts we have mentioned – imagining, personalizing, clarifying, and valuing. All four should be encouraged in the classroom, not only clarifying. Traditionally the classroom deals mainly with clarifying – the skill most understood by teachers – but as an act of reader response clarifying is related to imagining, personalizing, and valuing, and teachers need to understand this relationship as a means for developing techniques to help students to a fuller understanding and enjoyment of literature.

Together the four films in this series make up a theory about the creativity of reader response. Each film studies one kind of creative act through informal student discussions of works by Hemingway, Hawthorne, Williams, Joyce, and Welty. With the help of this guide, viewers are encouraged to analyze these responses in terms of their creativity.

THE READER AS PERFORMER

Each of the four films in the series *Creative Responses to Literature* tells the story of one act that readers perform in responding to literature. While the films treat the acts as separate and discrete, it should be pointed out that they probably occur simultaneously and that any creative response to literature is likely to involve all four. For example, if a reader puts out the energy to imagine the world of the literary text, that reader must have decided that the text has some value. Similarly, an act of *clarifying* implies an act of *valuing*, and both clarifying and *imagining* probably make use of *personalizing*. The point here is not to undercut our category system, nor to insist too heavily upon it, but to emphasize the participation of the reader as a creative performer, along with the writer of the literary text.

In one sense the term "response" as used to refer to the reader's role in the experience of literature is misleading and out-of-date. Response always implies a stimulus, and in this sense the term suggests a relatively passive reaction inspired by the literary text. Yet the reader, we are coming to see, plays an active, not a passive, role in reading – so much so that the reader can be considered a performer. This is especially true for the more creative reader, so that "the more creative" means "the more active" reader. This is *not* to confuse the reader with the writer – *not* to give readers a license to rewrite the text – but rather to identify the role of the reader, and in so doing to spell out the Bill of Rights, as well as the responsibilities, of the reader.

The advantages of adopting such a point of view include a greater congruency with reality. The traditional view of literature implies an individual writer, a specific text, and *a normative reader*. In other words, the view of the writer and text is highly realistic, even naturalistic, down to locating the warts on the writer and the placement of every word in the text. In contrast, the view of the reader has been idealistic – a picture of a unisex responder whose responses have been manipulated by the writer and can be predicted by the critic and teacher. But readers have warts too, and it is unrealistic to assume that all readers are alike. While it is true that all readers imagine in somewhat the same way, and in this sense are alike, it is also true that all writers imagine in the same way. Yet we are used to studying and valuing the individuality of each writer's imagination. We are yet to value each individual reader properly, and such study of the individuality of readers as exists has until recently been primitive.

Through providing a greater congruency with reality, this new view of the literary experience makes possible a series of attitudes for the classroom teacher who has to face existentially day-by-day the troublesome questions that literary critics face at a theoretical level. The PME concepts provide a language for working out the permissible limits of interpretation and involvement in any given situation for any given reader. At the classroom level, the concepts suggest the kinds of activities that might be meaningful and the direction these activities might take – activities directed at involving the readers more fully in their reading and showing this involvement through their expressive responses. By means of these activities the reader can become a performer.

The reader as performer overcomes inertia and indifference and becomes creative by exercising the imagination and directing it toward the goal of recreating the world of the book; by developing a sense of otherness through determining the relationship between the self and literary characters; by working out the logic of literary structures and the patterns of ideas in the work; and by making a commitment to meaning and emotion in the lives and situations depicted in the text and as rendered by the author.

Consequences follow from a recognition of the importance of the reader's role as performer in the literary experience. More than ever, it suggests that the teacher must work to create an atmosphere in which students will feel free to take risks in their statements about literature, to share their responses, and to tolerate and even understand different points of view. Students, especially at the higher grade levels, are not necessarily eager to become performing readers, and many would gladly settle for the passive role. Such students have learned from experience in classrooms and elsewhere not to take risks, not to share, and not to tolerate. They present a special but by no means unusual problem for teachers, who will need to develop strategies to encourage the students to give up their passive role. Teachers of athletics, of acting, of dance, and of vocational skills take it for granted that such strategies are necessary and have developed them in their own fields. English teachers will have to do the same.

On the other hand, there are students who aggressively come to school politically much more aware than students in the past and who are eager to claim what they take to be their rights. In the English classroom this means that these students feel that they have a right to their own interpretation and to their own scale of values. Such students may not in reality be creative performers so much as rebels

bent on putting down the society of the classroom. English teachers need strategies to deal with these students too, not by denying them their legitimate rights as readers but rather by being certain as to what these rights are.

Finally, there are students who come to school eager to be performers as readers. Even these students need direction and guidance, encouragement and discipline. These students are the English teacher's greatest challenge. They come to class motivated and serious about learning how to be expressive and honest through language. The teacher has to be equally serious and honest about the human possibilities of literature. The teacher also has to be astute in creating through proper activities a world of study for these students. The tendency is unwittingly to turn such students into mechanistic craftsmen who can articulate all the formal principles of literature without considering sufficiently the human content. Because *all* activities tend to become mechanistic, English teachers have to guard against valuing the skill apart from the performer, whether that skill be close reading of a metaphysical poem or, at the other extreme, simple decoding. If, as we have been suggesting, literature is a resource for potential human growth, then the goals and concerns of all English classrooms — from the gifted to the remedial — are the same in that at some level all student readers have to become performers through the aid of their teachers.

II

In the four films in the PME series *Creative Responses to Literature*, students of various grade levels, abilities, and backgrounds from nigh schools in Los Angeles talk about literrary works and their relation to these works. The students were selected because of their willingness to be shown talking about stories and plays that they had not previously discussed in their English classes. They were willing to take risks. The students were *not* selected because of superior abilities in English classes but because they liked to read imaginative works and seemed willing and able to share something of themselves — even before a camera. In sum, as readers they showed signs of being creative performers, though they were not necessarily the students who got the highest grades in their English classes.

The talk in the four films is unrehearsed and informal — on the spot responses to discussion topics and questions put to the students from off-camera. Because the responses were unrehearsed, they sometimes wandered, became repetitious, and were off the topic; and for these reasons, as well as for constraints of time, the talk was edited. In every instance in the editing we tried not to be misleading about the student's response and to pick representative responses. The topics and questions put to the students were designed to elicit responses that would document readers' behaviors and in so doing illustrate the concept. Because the concepts (imagining, personalizing, clarifying, and valuing) are acts that people perform in non-literary as well as literary situations, the questioning moved from the wide focus of life down to the narrower focus of reading experiences. In the discussion of each of the films in the paragraphs below, examples of the questions are given.

IMAGINING

In making the film on "imagining," we were aware that great importance is placed upon the "imagination" of the writer, which is a blanket term used to cover everything from the mental qualities of the writer to the world constructed in the writer's books. If, as we believe, readers perform acts similar to those of the writer, then the imagination of the reader is worth studying — particularly for teachers who hope to achieve greater understanding and enjoyment on the part of student readers. One way is by helping them to engage their imaginations more fully and more creatively with the text.

Just About Everybody is an Artist in His Own Way was made to reveal how adolescents use their imaginations in reading. Our idea was (and remains) that before teachers can try to improve their students' performances as imaginative readers, they have to know how the imagination works and how their students are performing. For this reason, first we asked the student readers whether or not they thought they were imaginative people and what role imagination played in their lives. For example, we asked: "In what ways do you use your imagination to make your life better?" We also asked: "Have you ever used your imagination to make your life worse?" Vignettes of the students' responses appear at the beginning of the film.

In addition, we asked the students how they used their imaginations in reading — with the goal of trying to understand how readers recreate out of the details in the work a fictional world, either one that is relatively familiar or one that is thoroughly unfamiliar. We did this in part by having the students read Ernest Hemingway's story "Indian Camp." We then asked: "What did you do while reading to help you to see the people, places, and situations in the story?" The answer is that they

analogized the more familiar with the less familiar so that they could enter the world of "Indian Camp." When they could not analogize -- when they could not see relationships between the story and their own lives and hence could not use those relationships to recreate a fictional world – then the students sometimes were able to perform the opposite acts of reversing and extending. That is, one student used the death of a sister to help him to see the fictional death of the Indian husband in the Hemingway story. Another student, with little experience of death, used the birth of a sister and imagined what the opposite experience might be like. In one case the student analogized; in the other, he reversed and extended.

When readers fail to analogize, extend, or reverse, they cannot make use of the details in the literary text. Such readers may not be overlooking the existence of the details that the teacher considers important so much as they may be unable to build structures on those details. They are failing to imagine. Other readers may stop for every analogy possible and in so doing nullify one of the basic principles of literature, which is that literature must by its nature be selective of human experience. Such readers invent structures and superimpose them one on the other. They are using their imaginations destructively rather than creatively, and they never do feel the shape of the literary experience. All readers on occasion fail to imagine or else imagine destructively. In order to help students to become more imaginative readers, teachers need to understand the workings of the imagination, its susceptibilities, and its uses.

PERSONALIZING

One of the consequences of the turmoil of the 1960's is that we are more aware than ever of the importance of personal relationships if society is to continue to function. The sixties manifested in public and political movements the implications of the findings of depth psychology, which has been developing new concepts since the turn of the century. Our new awareness of the importance of personal relationships in people's lives suggests that these relationships are more complex than once was thought. It no longer seems strange to consider that people have personal relationships with books. Readers have feelings about imaginative literature. They become involved with the characters in works in much the same way they get involved with other people. They bring their personalities to their reading – including their beliefs, ideas, and attitudes. All of this suggests the importance of "personalizing" as a concept to be studies by teachers of literature.

The film *Their Kinsman, Major Molineux* studies the effects of personality upon reading. The students in the film were asked first to talk about what they do when they try to understand other people and what difficulties they find in feeling with and for other people. Instances of their talk about these matters appear in the opening segment of the film. The students were then asked the question: "What is the difference between understanding people in life and characters in books?" The students agreed that the similarities outweighed the differences and that in life and in literature they found that they projected their own feelings onto other people and onto characters. They placed themselves in the situations and events depicted in the works.

To illustrate how personalizing works, we asked the students to read Hawthorne's story, "My Kinsman, Major Molineux." We then asked: "How do you manage to relate to the story when you haven't lived in the eighteenth century and have never been to New England?" We also asked: "Are some parts of the story totally foreign to your experience? Do these parts cut you off from the story?" Finally, we turned to the figure Robin, the young man in the story, and asked the students to discuss the ways in which they related to him. The talk reveals the ingenuity of readers in personalizing – in being able to make a creative entry into the literary work through their own experiences.

Even while acts of projection provide a creative entry for readers into literary works, these acts are of necessity limited by the personality and experiences of the reader. In addition, personalizing can be anti-creative when readers get so caught up in parallels, factual and imaginary, between their own lives and the lives of the characters that they fail to get a sense of the work as a whole. There are, of course, readers who have difficulty in personalizing – who cannot use the resources of their own personalities as entry into the fictional world of books. Student readers who personalize destructively need to be helped, as do students who cannot find ways to personalize at all. Understanding the psychology of reading will help teachers with these students and their particular problems, which are not unique to remedial students but are troublesome to all readers.

CLARIFYING

As a concept "clarifying" is the most familiar of the four in the series *Creative Responses to Literature.* English teachers traditionally give the greater part of the time they spend on literature to

clarifying texts with and for students. Teachers believe that it is important for students to understand the meaning of the text and that the classroom is the appropriate scene for sharing this meaning. The film on clarifying, by its very title, *The Meaning of Life*, suggests the relationship between this classroom activity (and why teachers place such importance upon it) and the larger human activity of a search for meaning in all aspects of life.

The film begins with the students talking – in response to a question put to them – about whether life has meaning. At the outset of the filming, the students made clear by gesture and intonation that they considered the question silly and the answer obvious. However, they became more engaged in the topic as they were asked such questions as: "Do you ever think about the meaning of your own life? Do you think there is meaning to your acts?" Various observations can be made about their responses. One has to do with the optimism of these young people, all of whom agreed that life has meaning, though they disagreed about what constitutes the meaning of life. Another has to do with the extent to which young people will accept authority in determining meaning. The students were divided about accepting authority in clarifying the meaning of life. Later in the film they were equally divided about accepting the authority of the teacher in clarifying literary works. The debate about the value of authority figures followed from their understanding of what meaning is. The students who saw meaning as something objective were eager to accept authority figures (author, teacher), while the students who saw meaning as subjective were less eager and more questioning.

The debate by the students in the film reflects a debate going on within the profession as a whole and mirrored in books as different as David Bleich's *Readings and Feelings: An Introduction to Subjective Criticism* and E.D. Hirsch's *Validity in Interpretation*. On a practical level for the classroom teacher the point at issue is: who can determine how personal a value should be placed on any detail in literature? We take the point of view in the film that the creative reader contributes to literary meaning by attributing symbolic values to the parts of the work (images, characters, plot segments, etc.) and by synthesizing these symbolic values into a mental construct. That is clarifying. Meaning takes place in the mind of the reader because of the nature of symbols, which, even while public, call up private associations.

To illustrate how clarifying involves the dual acts of attributing symbolic values and of synthesizing, we asked the students to read Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie*. We then asked: "What does the play mean to you? What in the play suggested that meaning?" "What do you make of Laura's being a cripple? Of her fondness for glass animals?" "What puzzles you most about the play and why?" The film shows the process by which readers start with a personal reading and look for ways to accommodate the interpretations of others to their own interpretations.

VALUING

Much of the theoretical discussion in preparation for making the film on "valuing" had to do with the location of values in literature. We puzzled about whether readers find values *in* literary works or place values coming from the readers' own personalities *upon* literary works. We also wondered about what is to be valued in literature. In all of this we tried to think through from the beginning matters that English teachers normally take for granted. In working with young readers we concluded that they both find value in and place value upon literary works, though readers contribute even to the value they find in the work. In one sense readers create the values of the works they read. We also concluded that what readers value can be identified and classified as (1) the imaginative content, (2) the meaning, or (3) the linguistic performance. Usually readers value some combination of the three.

In making *The Worth of Literature* we asked the students questions about what they value in life, particularly their school life. Not surprisingly, there were connections between what they valued in life and what they valued in literature. Specifically, we asked two students such questions as: "Do you ever consciously think about the values you hold?" "In school what do you value?" "In family life what do you value?" We then went on to ask: "What part does literature play in your life?" "What sort of books do you read and why?" The one student, a young woman, was interested in what she called "serious books," books that let her talk about the question of identity, and in school life she preferred classes in which there was "serious talk." The other student, a young man, was interested in books that were rich in characterization, and in school life he was most interested in his acting classes. He too was concerned about the question of identity, but he preferred to work out his identity through acting rather than through talking. Despite these differences, the similarities between these two students suggest that there are community standards, as well as personal standards, in valuing. For example, both students liked the works of Hesse and Camus according to standards set by the community of adolescents.

To show how valuing works, we asked students to read James Joyce's "Araby" and Eudora Welty's "A Memory." Joyce's story is of course famous and has been much explicated. Welty's story, although less well known, involves a pattern of action similar to that of "Araby" but with a female protagonist. In asking students questions about both these stories, we discovered that students can value meaning without valuing linguistic performance and without valuing the imaginative content. However, in such instances the meaning they value is likely to seem insufficient to an adult reader because a failure to value the imaginative content is a failure to value the experience portrayed, while a failure to value the linguistic performance is a failure to value the author's rendering of the experience. This rendering includes a sense that the author has understood the experience, accepted – sometimes reluctantly – the power of the experience, and even found a way to transcend the experience through language. The "meaning" understood by a student might include a clear understanding of plot, characterization, and theme as determined by most objective tests, but, unless the student also values the imaginative content and the linguistic performance, such meaning would not include the human and literary values that contribute to meaning as it is generally understood by experienced readers of literature.

Of the four concepts, valuing can be the most creative act of all by a reader, particularly if what is to be valued includes the imaginative content and the linguistic performance, as well as meaning. Readers become creative when they value experience – a small experience like a boy's going to a fair in "Araby" or the enormity of the experience of a tragedy like *Hamlet;* when they value the otherness of the author as expressed in the author's language, and in so doing give up their own destructive solipsism; and when they value their own minds as creative intellects, accepting literary meaning as dynamic rather than naively trying to find the "author's meaning" as a fixed object.

III

Throughout the discussion of the reader as performer, we have referred to the reader's creativity and the reader's rights. In speaking of the individual concepts (imagining, personalizing, clarifying, and valuing), we have tried to be specific and clear about what we mean by these terms, but we did not elaborate a comprehensive theory about literature – about the ontology of the literary text, the relationship between literary history and literary criticism, and the validation of literary interpretation. Without trying to cover so broad a topic, we do want to make explicit some attitudes about teaching literature embedded in what we have said about the individual concepts. We believe that teachers ought to encourage students to be creative in their reading by opening themselves up to the experience described in the text and by developing sensitivity to the language. This means recognizing that literature is a linguistic medium and that language is humanizing, especially as it reminds people of the need for accuracy and honesty. The student's own language ought to reflect the adequacy of the student's response. Hence the importance of talk about books, as shared response, in the classroom. The talk gives an opportunity for putting the response into words, for revising and shaping the response, and for testing the adequacy of the response – by the reader responding, by the group as a whole, and by the teacher.

What concerns all of us as teachers is the relationship of response to interpretation. Response seems to imply subjectivity, and interpretation implies objectivity. Our scientism encourages us to look for objective interpretation in the classroom and in published literary criticism. But as science today less and less recognizes distinctions between opposite terms like "inner" and "outer," so it seems less useful to hold on to the distinction between subjective response and objective interpretation. A reader's experience of a literary text takes place in the mind and the body, and in that sense is subjective; but the mind tests that response as articulated for coherence, logic, clarity – principles associated with objectivity. Readers bring their experience of the literary text into the classroom when they are students. A teacher who, in exploring a work with students, concentrates on validating one interpretation and treats that interpretation as the important experience of the literary work is fragmenting and reducing the experience. That is to see interpretation as divorced from response. We believe both critical theory and classroom practice should recognize the continuous process of response and interpretation – something the films in the series *Creative Responses to Literature* try to show.

IMAGINING

Just About Everybody is an Artist in His Own Way

Reader talk about recreating in the reader's mind the world of Hemingway's "Indian Camp"

DEFINITION OF CONCEPT

Imagining is bringing to life the world described in the literary text by analogizing the people, places, and situations and by reproducing the emotions contained in the work.

MAJOR POINTS IN THE FILM

1. Imagining is a natural activity, so much so that people use their imagination without being aware of it.
2. People can become exhilarated and set free by being made conscious of the role of the imagination in their lives.
3. Imagining is particularly important in literature: authors use their imaginations to create fictional worlds, and readers use their imaginations to recreate these worlds as they read.
4. No two readers imagine in exactly the same way, but readers generally perform similar acts as they imagine.
5. Readers analogize the people, places, and situations in the literary work through using personal experience to reproduce within themselves the emotions in the work.
6. Readers analogize the people, places, and situations in the literary work through using personal experience to reproduce within themselves the emotions in the work.
7. Through imagining, readers build a world based on the details provided in the work by the author.

ACTIVITIES BEFORE VIEWING

1. Have the group select one or several of the following:
   a) life in the year 2000
   b) life on the shores of the Amazon
   c) life in a school without any administration
   d) life without television, radio, and phonograph

   For each situation selected have the group imagine 5 or 6 features of such a "life," being as specific as possible (for example, how the group would spend their evenings presently without television). Ask the group to describe and discuss what mental acts they performed in imagining the details. Ask the group to generate principles of imagining from this experience and to test those principles against one of the items above that they did not originally select.
2. Have the group discuss the connotations of the words "imagination" and "imagining." In what areas of life do people use their imaginations? Are there areas where it is inappropriate to use the imagination?
3. Have the group discuss instances where people use their imaginations destructively instead of creatively. What is meant by the phrase "the failure of imagination"?
4. Have the group discuss whether artistic imagination is different from the imagination of everyday life. Are artists different from ordinary people?
5. There are many studies of specific writers that discuss their imaginations, studies that are sometimes called "The Mind of Author X." If possible, have someone in the group report on such a study and then have the group discuss the usefulness of such study in understanding literary works.
6. Have the group read in advance Hemingway's short story "Indian Camp." Have the group discuss the strategies they used to visualize aspects of the setting that were unfamiliar to them. How did these strategies make up acts of the imagination? Is there any way of verifying the accuracy of what the readers imagined as compared with what Hemingway wrote? Is it desirable to try to do so?
7. Have the group discuss the strategies they used to understand the experiences in the story, especially those experiences not personally familiar to them. What is the relationship between understanding and imagining?

ACTIVITIES AFTER VIEWING

1. Compare the principles of imagining that the group derived in Activity #1 with those in the film — specifically, with analogizing, extending, and reversing. Are the differences mainly of terminology or was the group's thinking different from the thinking in the film? Are there ways to reconcile the differences?
2. What details in "Indian Camp" both of setting and of experience did the students recreate in their own minds? What details in the story — details that the group thinks important — did the students fail to imagine, at least as revealed by the film? For example, in making the film, we were asked repeatedly by the students to explain Uncle George and his role in the story. (We did not discuss Uncle George with them until after the filming.) Why would the students have difficulty in imagining Uncle George?
3. How adequate is the overall view of the world of the story as imagined by the students?
4. One of the first viewers of this film commented after seeing it, "Now these kids are ready to be taught the story." What might such a remark mean?
5. Compare and contrast the imaginations of the different students in the film. What are the implications for the classroom?
6. Have the group think up strategies for helping their students to improve their literary imaginations.

PERSONALIZING

Their Kinsman, Major Molineux

Reader talk about projecting personal feelings, beliefs, ideas, and attitudes upon characters and events in Hawthorne's "My Kinsman, Major Molineux"

DEFINITION OF CONCEPT

Personalizing is projecting one's own experiences and feelings onto characters and events described in the literary work.

MAJOR POINTS IN THE FILM

1. Personalizing is the projecting of our own experiences and feelings onto others and the events involving them.
2. In our everyday lives we personalize in order to understand other people and the events around us.
3. As we personalize in life through our responses to people and events, so we personalize in our reading.
4. We project our own experiences and feelings onto the characters and events described in the literary work in order to understand the world portrayed and develop our interest in it.
5. This is sometimes called "identifying," but identifying involves both projecting and introjecting. That is, the reader can also attribute personality traits and events in literature to his own life.
6. Both in life and in literature, personalizing involves risk – in life not merely the risk of misunderstanding but also the possibility of doing damage to oneself and others.
7. In literature the risk of personalizing is that it can misdirect and hence limit a reader's understanding.
8. On the other hand, personalizing can be creative when it enables the reader to call up feelings adequate to the feelings in the work.

ACTIVITIES BEFORE VIEWING

1. Have the group agree on a controversial figure or a literary character. Ask the group members individually to spend five or ten minutes writing a brief character sketch of the figure or character. Have the group share their sketches with one another, noticing differences and similarities. Then ask the group members to account for the differences in terms of their own feelings and experiences that were projected onto the figure in the sketch. What conclusions can be drawn about the extent to which people's personalities enter into their vision and understanding of other people and of literary characters?
2. Ask the group to discuss the problems involved in understanding other people.
3. What is the difference between trying to understand people in life and people in books?
4. There are many studies of specific writers that discuss their personalities and the relationship of their personalities to their works. If possible, have someone in the group report on such a study and then have the group discuss the usefulness of such study in understanding literary works.
5. A famous theory about the relationship between personality and literary invention states that literary art is the product of neurosis (see Edmund Wilson's *The Wound and the Bow*). Have the group discuss the implications of this theory. If the theory is at all valid, would it be equally true that the most creative reading is the result of neurosis?
6. If a common statement about literature is that it reflects the world, how do literary works reflect specific individuals?
7. Have the group read in advance Hawthorne's story "My Kinsman, Major Molineux." Ask the group to discuss the young man Robin in the story. Ask the individual group members to relate what they see of themselves in Robin and how this is valuable to them in understanding the character and the story.

ACTIVITIES AFTER VIEWING

1. At the beginning of the film there is considerable talk by the students about relating to people in life and relating to characters in books. How insightful is this talk, and how helpful would it be for a teacher of these students to hear this talk before teaching these students?
2. Ask the group to work out together or in small groups brief personality sketches of the four students in the film. Use these sketches to discuss the statements the students make about Robin – how they personalized.
3. How adequate is the view of Robin as revealed by the student talk? What might an adult view of Robin include that the students leave out? Is the adult view necessarily the one that should be taught in the classroom? Is one goal of the classroom teacher to make adults of students through the study of literature?
4. Are there important details in the story that the students failed to personalize – at least as revealed by their talk in the film? How might students be encouraged to personalize such details?
5. Are there examples in the film of students giving too personal a reading to details in the story? How does a teacher decide such an issue?
6. On the basis of what each student says about "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," have the group discuss appropriate literary texts that the various students might be encouraged to read.
7. Have the group devise strategies for encouraging their own students to personalize more creatively and thus improve their understanding and enjoyment of literature.

CLARIFYING
The Meaning of Life

Reader talk about determining meaning in Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie*

DEFINITION OF CONCEPT

Clarifying is deriving meaning from a literary work by attributing symbolic values to the parts of the work and by synthesizing these symbolic values into a mental construct.

MAJOR POINTS IN THE FILM

1. The meaning of experience, both in life and literature, frequently needs to be worked out because it reflects the complexity of human actions.
2. The working out of meaning involves the analysis and interpretation of symbols as well as of the literal level.
3. People naturally think and express themselves in symbols, some commonly shared by large groups of people, some recognized only by members of a small sub-group.
4. A literary work is itself a symbol -- an intricate pattern which represents the feelings and ideas contained in the work.
5. Literature is made up of both large public symbols and smaller, more private ones, and meaning is rooted in these symbols.
6. Readers attribute symbolic values to the parts of the literary work, and they synthesize these values into a mental construct – this is "clarifying."
7. Readers will expend energy in clarifying because they feel frustrated when they do not understand.
8. Of the two parts of clarifying, it is the attributing of symbolic values that causes the most problems.
9. Readers debate about how personal a value should be placed on any detail in a literary work. This debate reflects a larger debate in our society about personal vs. impersonal literature.

ACTIVITIES BEFORE VIEWING

1. In advance of the meeting, arrange a collection of pictures ranging from photographs of well-known places to symbolic images known only to a few (such as the seal of a secret organization). Have the group try to determine the "meaning" (what it is a picture of) for each photograph. For the less well-known photographs (that is, for the images, symbols, etc.) have the group try to work out the meaning according to whatever clues they can find in the photograph. This should lead to a discussion of meaning and how meaning is determined.
2. When people say that "life has meaning," what do they mean? Are there different ways of interpreting the meaning of life?
3. Various professions are concerned with meaning: theologians, philosophers, psychiatrists, systems analysts. How do these professions differ in the way they look at meaning?
4. How do imaginative writers look for meaning? What is the relationship between the search for and discovery of meaning by the writer and the exploration of a literary text in an English classroom?
5. Various schools of literary criticism conceive of literary meaning in different ways: the formalists, the biographical critics, the archetypal critics, and the Freudians. Why can't literary critics and teachers agree on the meaning of literature and of literary works? Is it that literary study is imprecise as a discipline or that literature is especially rich?
6. Have the group read in advance Williams' *The Glass Menagerie*. Then have the group discuss the meaning of the play by identifying the major themes and symbols, and by considering what the play says about life.
7. Have the group discuss what they would consider the meaning of the play to be if they were to teach it to secondary students. In light of Question 6, are there meanings that the group considers too personal or too sophisticated for classroom talk? Are there other reasons for limiting classroom talk about meaning?
8. What details in the play do the members of the group find puzzling? Discuss some of these details, considering the nature and source of the puzzlement. What are the ways of resolving difficulties of interpretation? Can a literary interpretation ever be validated?

ACTIVITIES AFTER VIEWING

1. The film speaks of two activities that make up clarifying: attributing symbolic values and synthesizing these values into a mental construct. Compare and contrast this way of looking at meaning with the group discussion on meaning before viewing the film.
2. In the beginning of the film the students talk about the meaning of their lives. How useful would it be for an English teacher to hear these statements before teaching these students?
3. Discuss the meaning the students in the film find in Laura's unicorn. How adequate is their interpretation?
4. The young man in the film is puzzled by the statement at the end of the play that "nowadays the world is lit by lightning." If you were teaching this student, how would you help him to clarify this point?
5. The interchange at the end of the film between the young man and the young woman about allowing or not allowing a personal interpretation of literature is an important question for English teachers. Is there any agreement among the group members on this question? What are the terms of the debate?
6. How would the group respond to the following questions about *The Glass Menagerie?* Is there only one correct way of answering?
   a) Who is the central character in the play?
   b) How does the stage setting affect the meaning of the play?

   Is it possible that the answers to the questions are different for adolescents than for adults?
7. Using *The Glass Menagerie* as the text, have the group devise strategies for teaching adolescents how to clarify the parts of the play and the play as a whole. Try to think of strategies that would encourage the students to be creative and at the same time responsible in their interpretations.

VALUING

The Worth of Literature

Reader talk about finding value in and placing value upon James Joyce's "Araby" and Eudora Welty's "A Memory"

DEFINITION OF CONCEPT

Valuing is finding worth in and placing worth upon the imaginative content, the meaning, or the linguistic performance in the literary work.

MAJOR POINTS IN THE FILM

1. Valuing life experiences is a complex act that most of us do automatically and unconsciously.
2. Literary values are related to the personalities of readers and also to the values readers hold about life.
3. Valuing literature, like valuing in life, takes place according to personal and community standards.
4. Adolescents as a group tend to value certain writers such as Camus and Hesse, whose works encourage adolescent readers to personalize their responses and to share with one another their feelings and ideas.
5. These personal and community standards are applied to the imaginative content, the meaning, or the linguistic performance in the work – that is, to the pictures in the words, to an interpretation of what the work says about life, and to the writer's handling of the self in language.
6. Any act of valuing a literary work involves an implicit comparison with all the other works the reader has read.
7. Teachers, being more widely read and more experienced than adolescent students, try to encourage students to seek out deeper values in books. In doing so they should be alert to the dangers of ignoring the values that young readers bring to and find in the works.
8. Teachers can best help students to grow by nurturing the students' values rather than by imposing values from above.

ACTIVITIES BEFORE VIEWING

1. Have the group debate the worth of each of the following sub-genres of literature:
   a) science fiction
   b) detective fiction
   c) historical romance
   d) gothic thriller
   e) comic books
   f) pornography

   In each case what are the literary values and how are these values related to life?
2. Have the group discuss in what sense it is true that most people live by their values and some people (such as the English teacher) die for their values.
3. Discuss instances in which personal standards are reinforced by community standards, as well as instances where the two are in conflict. What conclusions about the act of valuing can be drawn from such discussion?
4. Ask the group to discuss what they value most in their professional lives. What agreement is there? What are the terms of the disagreements? How personal are the values?
5. Have the group discuss their choices for the five most worthwhile books of imaginative literature. Is it possible to work out criteria for judging the worth of books? What is the importance of individual personality in determining the worth of books?
6. What are the current literary fads among secondary students? What authors and sub-genres currently are in vogue? How would you account for these fads?
7. What authors and literary works seem to have retained their popularity among secondary students in the past ten to twenty years? How can such continuing popularity be accounted for through an understanding of adolescent values?
8. Have the group read in advance James Joyce's "Araby" and Eudora Welty's "A Memory." Then ask the group to discuss how they think their students would respond to these stories.

ACTIVITIES AFTER VIEWING

1. Discuss the differences between finding value *in* and placing value *upon* a literary work. What are the implications for classroom teaching?
2. The definition of valuing speaks of "imaginative content," "meaning," and "linguistic performance." Ask the group to discuss "Araby" and "A Memory" in terms of these three categories.
3. Have the group evaluate what the students say about "Araby" in terms of these three categories. If the members of the group were to teach the story to these students, how might they work with the students' values, as expressed in the film?
4. Have the group evaluate the students' valuing of "A Memory" as compared to "Araby." Ask the group to carry the discussion further by making their own comparison of the two stories. What are the major differences between the adolescent valuing of the stories and the adult valuing?
5. Have the group discuss strategies for determining the values of their own students.
6. What are the difficulties in working with students' values and what safeguards can be taken so that English teachers do not impose their own values on students? Is it ever appropriate for teachers to disseminate their own values? Is it possible to do so responsibly?
7. One of the functions of an English classroom is considered by many to be the preservation and passing on of the cultural values inherent in English and American literature. Have the group discuss their view of this role of the English classroom.

PEOPLE
PLACES
SITUATIONS
REVERSING & EXTENDING
ANALOGIZING

RADICAL CHIC AND THE LIBERATION OF THE READER

Activity: The class will memorize and reproduce in writing Shakespeare's Sonnet 18, "Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day?"

Activity: The class will continue in small groups to work on their scrapbooks of the 1920s to learn about the values of society in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby.*

Activity: The class will study Richard Wilbur's "The Fire Truck" with emphasis on the relation of the imagery to the structure of the poem.

Activity: The class will read Robinson's "Richard Cory" and will improvise dramatic situations that show Richard and the townspeople reacting to each other.

Activity: The class will write two-page personal responses to Williams' *The Glass Menagerie* as the first writing assignment on the play.

So read the lesson plans for the college-bound English classes, period 5, Lemon Valley Unified High School, Citrus City, California.

* * *

The city and school and even the lesson plans above are fictional, but we intend for the fiction to illuminate a reality: that on any one day, in any one school, five English teachers are likely to be using five different approaches to teaching literature. Is this the horn of nature's plenty, or is this pedagogical madness? Are these teachers all riding hobby horses, or do they know what they're doing? Are these practices related to theory, and in each case is the theory consciously held, reasoned, available for scrutiny and evaluation?

We can't know the answers to these questions on the basis of the evidence of five activities, though we might make some shrewd guesses. For one thing, it looks as if we have both nature's bounty *and* pedagogical confusion, if not madness. For another, it is probably safe to say that some of the practices are more consciously related to theories than others, and those are apt to be the newer activities. This isn't to say that the more recent activities are necessarily better, any more than it is to say the same thing about the theories. But it is to say that the more recent theories and their attendant practices are easier to talk about, and, more importantly, that they more accurately reflect the feelings, beliefs, ideas, and attitudes inherent in our society than do the older practices and theories. The reasons are various but chief among them is that each age pretty much unconsciously changes the values attached to literature and calls for new theories and practices to support those values. As modern society has accelerated the pace of change, the "ages" have become shorter and shorter, and new theories and practices appear with dizzying speed.

Among our five activities are artifacts of the ancient and more recent past along with examples of today's radical chic. They all reflect the values attached to literature by their ages, and they are all alike in that originally they were intended to help students personalize their experiences of literature — as those ages understood literature. As different as they look to us today, these activities represent versions of reader response as it has looked at different periods, if reader response is understood as the recognition of the reader's need for a vehicle to externalize root responses to the literary work. These activities have all been radical in acknowledging the reader, though they define the role of the reader differently, and they have all been chic.

Let's take the least popular, the most old-fashioned of the activities: memorizing, and particularly memorizing Shakespeare. Some teachers still assign memory work, though the practice is suspect among today's radical chic. What could lie behind memory work? For one thing, the desire to make the poem a part of the students, something to carry away from the class as part of their memory banks. In addition, the readers become reciters and through their recitations they express personal involvement with the poem and feel a oneness with the poet. Think of a time without radio or TV, without electronic amplification systems, when oratory was popular. It isn't hard to see how such a society might reinforce the work of the classroom. Students were able to use their skills in memorizing and reciting at home and in public. But think on a little bit: changing times, large classes, and soon the students are writing out their memory assignments. It's hard to feel a oneness with Shakespeare when worried about spelling and punctuation. Then came the electronic media, bringing a suspicion of the rhetorical style. We became a "cool" society that couldn't decide on a style for playing Shakespeare on the stage or for reciting his works in class. Finally, what had begun as organic and meaningful degenerated into punishment — rote work, mechanical and dreaded, but once based on a theory of reader response.

Post-World War II: a different time, a different society, and a new generation of mod teachers. It is here that we locate the origin of our second activity. While the society at large was tired of war and inclined to be apathetic about the need for social change during the Eisenhower years, the schools took on social responsibility as one of their domains. The "new" English teachers believed in the social backgrounds of literature as part of that new responsibility. Especially in American literature, there filtered down into the high school classroom the work of Vernon Parrington and other scholars who explained American literature in terms of cultural and historical contexts.

Scrapbooks became the vogue. They were viewed as a major means of relating the student to the literary work and its author. There was an almost unconscious belief that as the author had made up his or her book out of the scraps of social and political history, so the students would make up their scrapbooks. Through the scrapbook, the student was supposed to feel a oneness with the writer, and the scrapbook became the vehicle for carrying the response of the student. (Remember, too, we were in a period of late literary naturalism: the first books of Norman Mailer, John Horne Burns, and James Jones.) The social revolution of the 1960s exposed the naivete of the view of the 1950s about the social responsibility of the English teacher. In the world of SNCC and CORE and other activist groups, it became hard to believe in the meaning of clipping articles and pictures from old magazines. Again, what had started as an organic activity became mechanical. The scrapbook finally withered away to become reborn as the collage.

The post-Eisenhower years: a new sense of seriousness and purpose in American society, and with it a high seriousness in the English classroom. The movement known as "New Criticism," which came into prominence in the 1950s in the college classroom through the influential introductory text *Understanding Poetry* (1938) by Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, finally reached the high school English classroom. Although New Criticism frequently deals with wit in poetry, as a critical movement it is Arnoldian in its seriousness. The analysis of literary texts as "things in themselves" is taken as a valuable and useful activity because it makes the reader more aware of the work — gives insights into language and structure which become the student's understanding of the work. Hence the third activity: the study of the relation of the imagery of a poem to its structure. And this too is reader response, inductive discovery of the organic wholeness of the poem on the part of each reader — in other words, a study of what produced the effect of the work on the reader.

If New Criticism sometimes degenerates into distinguishing "right" from "wrong" readings, it began as a revolt against the non-serious reading of literary works which accepts the substitution of paraphrase, biography, and spiritual uplift for the close reading of the text. In taking the literary work seriously, New Criticism took the reader seriously, giving credit for his or her perception. New Criticism emphasized the sacredness of literature — the sacred word in the sacred text (and interpreted by the sacred teacher). But the growing rebellion of the 1960s would not tolerate the authoritarianism of the New Criticism, and the movement watched in horror as students invaded professors' offices and destroyed filing cabinets full of the "right" readings of literature.

Meanwhile, the Dartmouth Conference of 1965 had already brought an influx of new ideas into the teaching of English in the United States. In one sense the British members of the conference returned progressivism to its native country, especially in a new emphasis on the personal and linguistic growth of the student. The idea of a student-centered curriculum was introduced by James Moffett and others, until it has now become a new vogue. Encouraging the personal expression of students through acting out the literary experience has become an important new exercise in the English classroom. Hence the fourth and fifth activities — Creative Dramatics and writing personal responses. They are the very latest in English classroom activities for the mod teacher.

Participation, informality, and experimentation are all characteristic of the new activities. Students are encouraged to explore themselves, including their responses to literature. Every student is given the right to his or her own responses, and the teacher is considered a reader with personal responses rather than an arbiter of right meanings. Both the student and the teacher are asked to take risks as they work out what it means to be human. Affective growth, even a sense of "affective learning," stands beside cognitive learning as part of the desired goal. A mechanical, neurotic society is trying to take precautions so that its children do not develop the same neuroses.

The difference between this movement of reader response and the earlier movements is that this one openly makes the claim for the reader — asserts the reader's importance, acknowledges process and growth, and allows for fallibility even while it underscores the importance of literature in the curriculum. But already there are signs of change, including a reaffirmation by some of the need for re-emphasis on intellectual content. And these signs are present even before most teachers have made discovery and full use of the available activities which surround reader response. When dollars are given

to schools on the basis of reading scores, school principals may become impatient with Creative Dramatics, unstructured discussions, and formless writing. Twenty years from now Creative Dramatics may look as old-fashioned as memorizing Shakespeare.

Yet, if we can hypothesize the decline of the reader response movement, since movements, as we have shown, come and go, there is no simple going backward. The liberation of the reader has become part of the permanent record of the teaching of English, and no teacher — old-fashioned or new-fashioned — can laugh it off. Teachers must learn to understand and accept the new role of the reader if they want to make contact with their students. Students have changed, as society has changed, and these changes suggest that teachers must change.

II

The study of literature is affected not only by social shifts but also by shifts within the world of literature. The New Criticism, against which today's English teachers are rebelling, is the heir of ideas in circulation in the literary world for the past hundred years. In France in the nineteenth century, writers like Flaubert and Mallarmé emphasized the power of the word to move and change the world, and British and American writers of the first half of this century made this idea their own. For them literature became the embodiment of the word, with full spiritual and moral value. James Joyce used to boast that he could do anything with language. He could create the city of Dublin through words. He could be a magician through words. Ernest Hemingway talked again and again of the difficulty but also of the necessity of writing "truly." In the end the Hemingway "code," as we call it today, was meant to guide modern man through the post-war world when values were disrupted. His was to be the Mosaic code of the time. This view of literature by the writers in turn led critics and teachers to see literature as a collection of sacred texts, to be studied, explicated, and commented upon in much the way that Biblical scholars study the Bible.

In a world that is post-modern, rather than modern, literature has changed. Writers do not believe in the power of the word to create a new reality. Once again the stimulus has come from France with writers like Nathalie Sarraute and Alain Robbe-Grillet. These writers, along with others, are rejecting "literature" as a fraudulent and sentimental construct and have replaced it with an anti-literature that is meant to be modest, tentative, and concrete. This French view of literature has been sympathetically received in England and the United States, where writers were already moving in a similar direction.

In England the Oxford group of linguistic philosophers were explaining that language could deceive and mislead. These philosophers pointed out that some ideas and feelings could not be expressed faithfully and adequately in language at all. As Ludwig von Wittgenstein said, "What can be said at all can be said clearly, and what we cannot talk about we must consign to silence." British writers like Iris Murdoch and Harold Pinter and American writers like Edward Albee and Donald Barthelme have worked out writing strategies to cope with what they believe to be the reduced power of words. Critics are writing criticism appropriate to this new anti-literature, and teachers are beginning to respond sympathetically to this new view of literature, which affects our understanding of traditional literature as well.

The broad effect of this revolution in literature, involving a struggle to recover belief in language, has been the rediscovery of the importance of the role of the reader. For the classroom teacher of literature, the consequences of this cultural shift are profound, both invading the day-by-day activities of the classroom and affecting philosophic beliefs about the nature of literature. In practical terms, it means that the student comes to class less and less to learn the "truths" of literature as interpreted by the teacher and more and more to learn how to perform in various ways, both as a reader and a human being.

III

We take it for granted that reading good literature is a worthwhile activity, but probably we should ask ourselves why it is so. Frankly, most of the traditional answers — that literature builds moral character, that it leads to the good life, that it is useful work — not only won't hold up but actually sound cynical in today's world. Other answers — that reading literature provides satisfaction and knowledge — are more acceptable except that it is not at all clear how literature does so. In the past, society in general and the English profession in particular have been more or less satisfied with taking this pronouncement on faith, but we — and our students — are less likely to take anything on faith today. Fortunately, striking advancement in knowledge coming from work in the behavioral sciences

has provided some information that is relevant here. There is ample data to prove that it actually feels good to be creative.

One answer, then, to the puzzle of why it feels good to read a literary text is that reading literature, as well as writing it, is one way of being creative. We are creative in reading literature primarily through our response to the work. In *The Dynamics of Literary Response*, Norman N. Holland shows that in reading literary works we respond "in richer, deeper ways than we can to reality. We feel more fully, more profoundly." He shows also how it is that literature provides knowledge through reader response: "We bring to the events of a work of literature a much larger range of response, one that alters our very perceptions." This change in perception means the creation of new knowledge on the part of the perceiver, the reader.

Through creative response to literature the reader — for our purposes the student — produces new knowledge for himself, and conceivably for others, and receives emotional satisfaction. Part of the knowledge that is created is knowledge about the literary text itself. But if the text is itself the source of knowledge, one might wonder how it is that a reader could contribute to that knowledge. We all believe that literature makes a contribution to readers, but how do readers contribute to literature? Literary critics have always known that readers' responses count for something in the experience of literature. At a simple, but important, level, the combined judgment of a group of informed readers over a period of time establishes that a novel is a "great" book. Readers not only confer greatness upon it, but in a sense, they make it great.

The first literary critic, Aristotle, gave reader (or audience) response a prominent place when he noticed that the effect of tragedy is the purgation of the emotions of pity and fear. Aristotle suggested that the act of purgation was in itself a good thing, but he doesn't explain *how* it is so. By and large, the history of literary criticism shows that the critics and theorists have borrowed heavily from other parts of the *Poetics*, especially from those sections suggesting principles or rules for evaluating excellence in a literary text. The so-called three unities was the best known part of Aristotle for centuries. Most of the critics left alone what we might call the "reader response" part of Aristotle's criticism.

But the greatest critics, Dr. Johnson and Samuel Coleridge, have written of the contribution of the reader, a notion that was developed by the romantic writers and critics. Hazlitt wrote that "It is we who are Hamlet." In the twentieth century, Marcel Proust wrote a statement that has become famous in studies of theories of response to literature and to the other arts: "In reality, each reader reads only what is already within himself. The book is only a sort of optical instrument which the writer offers the reader to enable him to discover in himself what he would not have found but for the aid of the book. It is this reading within himself what is also in the book which constitutes proof of the accuracy of the latter."

Literary critics and creative artists have had insights, based on self-exploration and intuition, into the role of reader response as an active agent in the experience of literature. Recently, these insights have been validated by persons working from different perspectives: literary inquirers like James Squire and Alan Purves; literary theorists like Simon Lesser, Norman Holland, and David Bleich; and leading psychologists and psychoanalysts, such as David Rapaport and Franz Alexander, most of whom build on the pioneering work of Freud.

The behavioral sciences have done much to illuminate the nature of the writer's talent, which, if ultimately unknowable, is nonetheless more understandable today. Similarly, the reader's talent is today more understandable than in the past, and hence more accessible to teachers. If classroom teachers cannot "teach" creative responses, they can learn to reconstruct the steps in the mental process performed by the student as he responds to the literary text. They can devise skills for encouraging the student reader to make changes in the process, changes that would produce more creative response — more creative in being more adequate to the feelings and ideas in the text. Teachers could learn to become more creative in their own responses to the literature they teach. Like their adolescent readers, teachers should become liberated, too.

Portions of this essay appeared in earlier form in *Theory Into Practice*, XIV, 3 (June 1975).

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. Who should see these films?
A. Anyone who teaches literature on a secondary level, plans to teach literature on this level, or trains teachers who teach literature.

Q. What about reading teachers?
A. Reading teachers who work on the secondary level would find these films useful because they help to explain an important part of the act of reading.

Q. What is the best way to see these films?
A. As part of a training group, either preservice or inservice, because the films raise issues and lead naturally to discussion.

Q. Is there a difference between preservice and inservice use of the films?
A. No and yes. No, because both preservice and inservice viewers will be able to profit from the insights and documentation about readers contained in the films. Yes, because preservice viewers might see these films as part of a methods class, with appropriate activities, while inservice viewers might see the films in various kinds of workshops. All viewers will want to master the concepts, but the concepts will take on meaning and value according to the background, experience, and situation of the user.

Q. Must I see all four films in order to make sense of any one film and its concept?
A. No, each of the four films is complete in itself and tells the story of one kind of response to literature. That is, each film fully covers one concept — but before using any film in the series, you should read the introductory matter in this guide.

Q. Does that mean I need to see only one film in order to get the full effect of the series?
A. No, the more you see, the better. When you see only one film, you are exploring only one kind of response to literature. Reader response is almost never simple but is made up of various responses simultaneously. The films deliberately focus on one aspect of response to literature for the purpose of study and analysis. The more films you see, the more comprehensive will be your understanding.

Q. Is there a preferred order of use?
A. Yes and no. Yes, depending on who is using the films, one order of use makes the most sense. No, there is not *one* preferred order of use for all viewers.

Q. Can I use these films with my secondary students?
A. Some high school teachers have expressed interest in showing them to their students, though the films were not designed for such an audience. Frankly, we're not sure of the effect on such an audience.

Q. How should I prepare myself to see these films?
A. University teacher trainers and inservice workshop leaders will undoubtedly want to prepare adequately for using the films, including previewing the films before showing them to a group. Decisions have to be made as to whether to assign reading or other outside activities before the group meets. Further decisions involve whether to share this guide fully with the group, including whether to duplicate portions of it.

Q. How much time should I plan to spend on any one film, and how many films can I study in one session?
A. A lot depends on your purposes and the kind of group you are working with. It also depends on how many times you view each film. Many groups find a second, and even a third, viewing valuable. You could spend anywhere from half an hour to three-to-four hours on each film. We have found that two or three films is about the limit for half a day's study.

Q. Where did you get your concepts and their definitions?

A. The concepts come both from traditional literary criticism and from modern psychology. The definitions reflect this dual origin as they bring together insights from the two disciplines. In this sense these concepts are truly interdisciplinary. Literary criticism has proved its usefulness in illuminating texts. Psychology is helpful in illuminating the acts of readers and authors. With these PME concepts, the triad of reader-text-author is made complete.

Q. How much knowledge of literature and of psychology must I have to understand and use these films?

A. A knowledge of the issues surrounding the teaching of literature is probably as important as any knowledge about literary or psychological theory or acquaintance with specific works. In these films we take the position that what the teacher of literature needs to know more about are the creative acts of readers — imagining, personalizing, clarifying, and valuing. Through these acts readers take an active role in their experience of literature, and teachers need to know more about the reader as a "performer."

Q. What, then, is the relation of your films to classroom teaching?

A. These are not, repeat not, how-to-do-it films. The films and guide provide a method of analysis — a way of seeing students in their relationships with books through the acts of student readers as revealed by their talk about literature. By bringing together insights from two disciplines, these concepts provide an innovative approach to understanding readers. They should permit teachers to be more effective in choosing texts, planning activities, and helping individual students understand and enjoy literature.

CONCEPTS IN THE FILM SERIES

CREATIVE RESPONSES TO LITERATURE

1. Imagining: Bringing to life the world described in the Literary text by analogizing the people, places, and situations and by reproducing the emotions contained in the work.

2. Personalizing: Projecting one's own experiences and feelings onto characters and events described in the literary work.

3. Clarifying: Deriving meaning from a literary work by attributing symbolic values to the parts of the work and by synthesizing these symbolic values into a mental construct.

4. Valuing: Finding worth in and placing worth upon the imaginative content, the meaning, or the linguistic performance in the literary work.

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The Ideological Content of Literature.	*Beliefs and Ideas:* reader talk about ideology in Roger Simon's *The Mama Tass Manifesto.* 13.5 min.
The Ethical Content of Literature.	*Poetic Justice:* reader talk about right and wrong in Ring Lardner's "Haircut." 11 min.
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